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# Objective and Tentative Lesson Plan

## Objective

Have students understand the breadth of the arguments that make up Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* and unpack regards the phrase, “The history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggles.”

Students will understand how central class conflict is to Marx’s thought as they debate the question of whether to rename the League of the Just and whether to replaces its motto “All Men are Brothers”, with a title and phrase that are explicitly antagonistic.

## Lesson Plan:

1. Instruction, Instructions and Questions: 10 Minutes
2. Divide students into groups: 5 minutes
3. Speech preparation within groups: 15 minutes
4. **Round 1**: Should the League of the Just change its name and motto? If so, to what? 15 Minutes
5. Vote: 2 Minutes
6. **Round 2:** Should we endorse Marx’s Manifesto as is, or should we require him to make changes first? 15 Minutes
7. Vote: 2 minutes
8. Reflection: 10 Minutes

NB: All page numbers referenced are to Robert C. Tucker’s *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second Edition.

# Introduction and Instructions

## Introduction

Welcome to London in 1848! Not just the capital of the British Empire, London is the capital of the most industrialized nation in the world.

However, this industrialized advance has come at a tremendous cost: men and women work twelve or even fourteen-hour days in the factories that produce immense wealth, in the form of cotton coats, cannons and the engine parts essential for the new trains that crisscross England. But while the owners of the factories get richer, the workers do not.

Across Europe, a diverse crowd of men and women have decided that they have had enough. They disagree as to the precise nature of the problem, but they have agreed to work together under the name of the League of the Just. You are a member of the League of the Just. Another member is a thirty-year-old German exile, a failed professor and provocative journalist by the name of Karl Marx.

This February, Marx, with some editorial help from his friend Frederick Engels, has just completed his explosive “Communist Manifesto”. Since so many of the League of the Just are also German exiles, he wrote it in German. Marx argues that the prescriptions in his manifesto are the result of a scientific approach to history, as his theory of class struggle explains why one historical time period is replaced by another.

Will the League of the Just agree with Marx, and endorse his manifesto?

## Instructions

In this game, you will be divided into five factions, some explicit supporters of Karl Marx, but many others are socialists or anarchists who agree with only some of what Marx has to say.

Each faction has their own, unique and *secret*, goals. Do NOT reveal your faction’s goals to people outside your faction.

Each faction is capable of gaining five points, depending on the result of the votes.

At the end of the game, we will see which faction wins!

After you are divided into the five factions, you will have fifteen minutes to prepare for the debate on the floor of the League of the Just. On the agenda are two questions:

1) Should the League of the Just change its name? If so, to what?

2) Should we endorse Marx’s Manifesto as is, or should we require him to make changes first?

Each faction will need one member to present a speech to the League on one of these topics, as described by your faction’s instruction sheet. You will need to turn in your notes for this speech at the end of class.

But while we will only have five formal speeches, all members of a faction are encouraged to ask questions, make proposals and, as long as it is in character, heckle others.

We will take fifteen minutes for each topic, after which we will vote.

I will act both as the Game Master, clarifying and enforcing rules when necessary, and also as the parliamentarian of the League of the Just. That is, I will keep order during the debate.

# Communists: Followers of Marx

You are a combination of labor leaders, union organizers, and exiled journalists and professors from Germany. You believe that Marx’s ideas are correct and that these ideas need be at the front and center of the League of the Just. For you agree with Marx: there is a science to history, one based on an economic understanding of different historical periods. You especially agree with Marx on two key points about the present:

1. The current economic arrangement is one of capitalism, in which businesses owners (the bourgeoisie), gain power and wealth at the expenses of workers (the proletariat)
2. While the proletariat currently has less power than the bourgeoisie, that will change if the proletariat organizes itself into a political party that represents workers

## Goals:

* 2 Points *Change the Name and Motto*: Successfully propose and pass a resolution changing the name of your organization from “The League of the Just” to something else. This new name *must* emphasize that you represent workers only; not workers and owners, just workers. You also must propose a new motto: currently, it is “All Men are Brothers”, which foolishly supposes that the bourgeoisie and proletariat can work together. Propose that the new motto of the organization be “Workers of the world unite!”, which makes clear that the proletariat and bourgeoisie are on opposite sides (look at pages 482-3 especially). You will be eligible for partial credit for partial results.
* 3 Points *Officially Endorse the* Manifesto: Successfully defend the *entire* contents of the *Communist Manifesto* from attack *and* get your organization adopt it as your official document. You will be eligible for partial credit for partial results.

## Requirements:

Speech, *A New Name for the League of the Just*: As a group, write between 200 and 300 words that one of you can use to propose a new name for your organization. In this speech, you must propose a new name for the organization, possibly “The International Workingmen’s Association”, and a new motto for the organization, “Workers of the World Unite!”. Use arguments from the *Manifesto* for why this name change is necessary. Your speech should include at least two direct quotes.

Turn in the written version of this speech at the end of class for credit.

Respondents: Each member of your group, except the person who gives the speech, must address the League of the Just at least once to advance your group’s goals

# Anarchists: Followers of Bakunin

You are combination of labor leaders, disgraced revolutionaries from Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire and disgruntled craftsmen who are losing their livelihoods to the newly mechanized industry. Like your leader, the former Russian prince Mikhail Bakunin, you believe that Marx’s ideas are mostly correct: like Marx, you believe that there is a science to history, one based on an economic understanding of time periods. You also with Marx that in the present economic arrangement, capitalism, business owners, (the bourgeoisie) gain powers and wealth at the expense of workers (the proletariat). Like Bakunin, you believe that the solution to this problem is for the proletariat to ally themselves with peasant farmers and skilled craftsmen against the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, you, like Bakunin, are anarchists: you believe that a just world cannot be created with the state. Rather, the proletariat, craftsmen and peasants must unite to fight the bourgeoisie themselves and their state representatives!

## Goals:

* 3 Points, *Modify the Manifesto*: Because you agree with most of Marx’s ideas, you want the League to endorse the Manifesto – but only if they modify it! You will get all four points if the League endorses the Manifesto if they agree to these changes. You will receive partial credit for partial success.
	+ - Marx must rewrite the Manifesto to make it clear that the proletariat (workers) will only win if they ally with peasant farmers and skilled craftsmen (pages 481-2)
		- Marx must rewrite the Manifesto to make it clear that this alliance *cannot* be a political party: it must be a revolutionary organization that aims to overthrow the state! (pages 483-4)
* 2 Point, *Name Change*: Help the League of the Just adopt a new name that makes it clear that your organization does not support the bourgeoisie (business owners).

## Requirements:

Speech, *Modify the* Manifesto: As a group, write between 200 and 300 words that one of you can use to explain why the League of the Just must modify the *Manifesto* in the way that your group wants. Your speech should include at least two direct quotes.

Turn in the written version of this speech at the end of class for credit.

Respondents: Each member of your group, except the person who gives the speech, must address the League of the Just at least once to advance your group’s goals

# Christian Socialists

You are a combination of wandering preachers, pious labor leaders, and disgraced clergy who were too radical for their respective denominations. You all agree that 19th century Britain is not living up to the loving message of Jesus Christ. But unlike many of the so-called Christians in the Church of England, you believe that it is a requirement of people of faith to work together to create a world in which there is no injustice or exploitation. That is why you were eager to join the League of the Just, as it was clear to you that factories need to change how they are run and that workers need more power and more wealth.

As open minded Christian socialists, you are willing to work with anyone, including secular Jews such as Karl Marx. However, you are scandalized that in his most recent publication, Marx suggests that religion has no role in the fight for justice! Furthermore, he argues that marriage and even the family are not holy institutions, but are rather products of particular historical time periods. Marx even advocates for free love between men and women!

You are excited at the energy that this young Marx has brought to the organization, but all agree that it is essential that the League reject these ideas!

## Goals:

* 4 Points, *Modify the Manifesto*: Because you agree with many of Marx’s ideas, you want the League to endorse the Manifesto – but only if they modify it to your liking! You will get all three points if the League endorses the Manifesto if they agree to these changes. You will receive partial credit for partial success.
	+ - Marx must completely rewrite section III.1.A “Feudal Socialism.” In this section, Marx attacks all Christian socialists, past and present. You cannot endorse the Manifesto if this is left in.
		- Marx must rewrite the Manifesto to make it clear that morality and religion comes from God and is not a product of history (see page 480)
		- Marx must rewrite the Manifesto to make it clear that marriage and the family are holy arrangements which socialist seek to protect from the ravages of capitalism (pages 487-88)
* 1 Point, *Keep the Name and Motto of the League of the Just*: You like the name and motto of the League of the Just and would prefer to keep it. You are more attached to the organization’s motto, “All Men are Brothers”, because of its religious overtones. You will receive partial credit for partial success.

## Requirements:

Speech, *Modify the* Manifesto: As a group, write between 200 and 300 words that one of you can use to explain why the League of the Just must modify the *Manifesto* in the way that your group wants. Your speech should include at least two direct quotes.

Turn in the written version of this speech at the end of class for credit.

Respondents: Each member of your group, except the person who gives the speech, must address the League of the Just at least once to advance your group’s goals

# Bourgeois Socialists: Sympathetic Industrialists

You are industrialists, men like Frederick Engels and Wilfred Owens, who own factories. You have seen first hand the horrible conditions in which your workers live and work. Like Engels and Owners, you are convinced that the current capitalist arrangement is not just and needs modification. You are also men of science, so you appreciate the rigor with which Marx has analyzed both the past and the present. As industrialists, you appreciate how Marx explains all historical changes as the results of different economic arrangements. You even agree that capitalism needs to be replaced by socialism, but you are astonished that Marx thinks that workers can make this transition on their own! You believe that the transition to socialism can only be achieved by the bourgeoisie (business owners) and the proletariat (the workers) collaborating.

## Goals:

* 2 Points, *Keep the Name*: You like the name League of the Just and its motto, “All Men are Brothers” and want to keep both, as it makes clear that the proletariat (workers) and bourgeoisie (business owners) can work together. You will get 2 points if you keep this name. You are eligible for partial credit for partial success.
* 3 Points, *Modify the Manifesto*: Because you agree with many of Marx’s ideas, you want the League to endorse the Manifesto – but only if they modify it to your liking! You will receive partial credit for partial success.
	+ - Marx must completely rewrite Section III.1.A “Petty-Bourgeois Socialism” and section III.2. “Conservative Socialism” In these sections, Marx attacks those who wish to make alliances between the proletariat (workers) and the bourgeoisie (business owners like yourselves)
		- Marx must rewrite the Manifesto to make it clear that while the proletariat and the bourgeoisie may have opposing interests as *classes*, individual members of the bourgeoisie can work alongside the proletariat to produce socialism

## Requirements

Speech, *Keep the Name and Motto* “League of the Just": As a group, write between 200 and 300 words that one of you can use to explain why the League of the Just must keep its name *and* its motto “All Men are Brothers”. Your speech should include at least two direct quotes from the *Manifesto* to support your argument.

Turn in the written version of this speech at the end of class for credit.

Respondents: Each member of your group, except the person who gives the speech, must address the League of the Just at least once to advance your group’s goals

# Proto-Feminists

You are women workers, women labor leaders, disgraced daughters of aristocrats who refuse to abide by the rules of the day and men sympathetic to the idea that a just world is not possible without equality between the sexes. You are all drawn to Marx’s ideas because he highlights how rapidly British society has changed in the past decades with the spread of industry. Your furthermore agree with Marx that capitalism is a great leveler of the sexes: under the crushing weight of capitalism, previous expectations for men and women are cast aside as the proletariat (workers) desperately seek wages and the bourgeoisie (business owners) relentless seek profit. You agree with Marx that there is much from the past that needed to be cast aside, most especially marriage the family. You agree with Marx that marriage is an inherently hierarchical institution and that socialists must instead advocate for free love between men and women; indeed, some of your member even advocate for free love between men and men and women and women! However, you think that in other respects, Marx has not gone far enough: even though he acknowledges that women are workers, he still prioritizes male workers.

## Goals:

* 3 Points, *Change the Motto and Name*: You also must propose a new motto: currently, it is “All Men are Brothers”, which foolishly supposes that the proletariat consists only of men and that the proletariat can collaborate with the bourgeoisie. Propose a new motto – and possible a new name for the organization as well – that recognizes the important contribution that women play in the proletariat (working class) against the ruling bourgeoisie (business owners). You will be eligible for partial credit for partial results.
* 2 Points, *Pass a Modified Version the Manifesto*: Because you agree with many of Marx’s ideas, you want the League to endorse the Manifesto – but only if they modify it to your liking! You will receive partial credit for partial success.
	+ - Marx must re-write the *Manifesto* to describe the proletariat (working classes) as including both men and women (see pages 482-3 especially)
		- NOTE: you will lose points if the Manifesto is passed and the section on the abolition of the family and the promotion of free love is dropped (pages 487-88)

## Requirements

Speech, *Change the Motto of the* “League of the Just": As a group, write between 200 and 300 words that one of you can use to explain why the League of the Just *must* change its name “All Men are Brothers”. Your speech should include at least two direct quotes from the *Manifesto* to support your argument.

Turn in the written version of this speech at the end of class for credit.

Respondents: Each member of your group, except the person who gives the speech, must address the League of the Just at least once to advance your group’s goals